

Request for Proposals for Website Redesign 2025

Maud Preston Palenske Memorial Library - www.librarybythelake.org

The **Maud Preston Palenske Memorial Library** is accepting proposals to design and develop a comprehensive overhaul of the Library's current website (librarybythelake.org).

Our goal is to have an attractive, intuitive, user-friendly, flexible website that functions equally well on all commonly used computers and mobile devices, and which integrates multiple third-party websites as seamlessly as possible. This will be a concept-to-completion project, and will require live, real-time collaboration with the Library's Website Committee.

Submission Deadline: November 10th, 2025

PROJECT TIMELINE

- October 20- RFP released
- October 29- Deadline for vendor questions
- October 27- Deadline for Library answers to be publicly posted
- November 10- Deadline for submission of proposals
- November 17- Website Committee completes review of proposals and selects finalists
- November 18 – 21 - Candidate presentations and interviews
- November 25- Website Committee presents recommended proposal to Board of Trustees

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Submissions that do not include each of these requirements will not be considered. Electronically submitted proposals must be in the form of a PDF; no zip files will be accepted.

- 1) Contact information for firm and proposal coordinator.
- 2) Company profile.
- 3) Portfolio of related projects completed in the past five years.
- 4) References from at least three similar projects completed within the past three years, including the public URLs for their associated websites. Feel free to list and link to any additional sites you've created which feature relevant components to this project.
- 5) Brief introductions to the team members who would be assigned to this project.
- 6) Project narrative which includes a project overview and examples of your UX and responsive design expertise.
- 7) Training outline for the Library's website committee and other key staff, including any support documentation you will provide.
- 8) Description of ongoing support provided, including any fees
- 9) Total project cost and payment schedule, itemized based on the Project Requirements, Additional Features, and/or Project Schedule. You may list optional and recommended items in a separate section.

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10) Proposed project timeline with major milestones

DIRECT QUESTIONS AND SUBMIT PROPOSALS TO:

Paula Stakley
Library Director
Maud Preston Palenske Memorial Library
500 Market Street
Saint Joseph, Michigan 49085
269-983-7167 x712 or pstakley@sjcity.com

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Maud Preston Palenske Memorial Library (MPPML) is a single-site library in southwest Michigan, serving the City of St. Joseph and St. Joseph Charter Township. The library's mission is to creatively serve our entire community with diverse resources, inclusive space, and opportunities for knowledge, learning, and literacy. Our aim is to serve people of all ages by actively providing easily accessible information, materials, services, and programs designed to meet the community's evolving educational, recreational, cultural, and informational needs. The Library's website is the starting point for patrons and staff, and it serves as the portal to all of our third-party services, including but not limited to:

- Our online catalog, Library.Solution (The Library Corporation or TLC), which will soon be under review for potential future replacement;
- Our interlibrary-loan catalog, MeLCat;
- Our online event and meeting room calendars – which is currently Google calendar;
- Our subscription databases, including Mango Languages, as well as the Michigan e-Library sites;
- Our downloadable digital content providers, including Libby and Hoopla;

The purpose of our website is to allow our users to find library information, materials, programs and events. Our objective is to have a website that is intuitive, dynamic, comprehensive, adaptable, and efficient. The site should be visually pleasing and include our existing logo. The site's content management system should be flexible enough for Library staff to easily and routinely update content and to add or change existing features, menus, etc., as needed. Our current website is YouSeeMore, a proprietary CMS run by TLC.

SCOPE OF PROJECT

Design the visual, navigational, and content structure components of the Library's website. This will be done in conjunction with key Library staff members.

- Create a master visual design using the Library's colors, logo, graphics, and/or photography;
- Create subsidiary looks for different types of pages and/or Library units as needed (e.g., various Library departments, Digital Collections, Event Calendar, Services and Policies, etc.);
- Create a comprehensive navigational structure;
- Migrate existing content, as determined with the Library's Website Committee;

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- Implement these visual and navigational systems with templates, which MPPML staff can populate using the CMS;
- Implement the new website on a temporary development /staging site to allow staff access and familiarization;
- Conduct usability testing on all major operating systems, browsers, and device types, with MPPML users selected by the Website Committee;
- Include any revisions indicated necessary through usability testing;
- Train and support key Library staff on website maintenance and management;
- Provide support for MPPML staff as they populate the website with migrated current site content and/or new content;
- Transfer ownership of website templates and content to the Maud Preston Palenske Memorial Library;
- Provide ongoing assistance and support as needed, including recommendations for hosting options

PRODUCT REQUIREMENTS

The new website will incorporate the following requirements. This list is intended to be representative and not necessarily comprehensive; amendments may occur throughout the project based on collaboration between the vendor and the Library's Website Committee.

- Site will be attractive and professional, and will reflect the Library's mission and commitment to the community; Site will be inviting, dynamic, adaptable, informative, flexible, and, above all, user-friendly;
- Navigation structure should be intuitive to patrons, providing rapid links to information;
- Site will be fully searchable;
- Site will meet all applicable state and federal accessibility regulations, including Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1, Level AA
- All pages and content will load quickly, consistently, and accurately on all common operating systems and browsers, especially on those used on popular mobile devices, and when alternative font sizes or other accessibility features are used;
- Create smooth interfaces between online public access catalog (OPAC), online event calendar, administrative/staff contacts, etc.;
- Include a statistics-gathering component, such as web hit counts and other usage information;
- Include ability to create online forms for things like a contact us form, patron suggestions, or volunteer applications;
- Site CMS and related software/tools must be publicly available for purchase or use;
- Site will include a secure, private Administrative/Staff component which requires login IDs and passwords;
- Administration of web content should allow MPPML to assign and control levels of staff access for updating content (i.e., author, editor, publisher);

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- Updating site content will require no more than intermediate word processing and Internet skills for most functions;
- Site will allow staff to upload a variety of file types (e.g., PDF, photos, video, etc.) with ease and broad functionality (i.e., create photo galleries, etc.);
- Site will include social media links at multiple site levels including ability to add, remove or edit them as necessary; we currently utilize Facebook, Instagram, and Bluesky;
- Existing site content migration to new site, as determined jointly by vendor and the Library;
- Site will be subjected to thorough usability testing and revised accordingly;
- Vendor will provide options for site management documentation and ongoing technical support.

ADDITIONAL FEATURES AND SERVICES

The Library also welcomes recommendations and separate pricing on implementing the following:

- Website hosting plans;
- Enable e-commerce features for donations, fines, event tickets, etc.; We currently utilize the square payment system.
- Calendaring platform with room reservation capabilities
- Foreign language translation options for our website's pages;
- Access & storage for our community's digitized yearbooks (PDF format) and select Local History Collection items.

DELIVERABLE PRODUCTS

Produce a complete and useable library website, implemented with responsive design and a web content management system, which can then be maintained, updated, and altered by the MPPML staff. All content, coding, and graphics will become the sole property of MPPML. The Library will maintain ultimate editorial control of all content.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The overall goal of our selection process is to choose a vendor that possesses a balance of technological and design expertise, along with an abiding commitment to customer service. The vendor's ability to collaborate effectively with the MPPML Website Committee is essential to this project; we require excellent communication and responsiveness. Maud Preston Palenske Library will endeavor to ensure bids submitted are comparable. Maud Preston Palenske Library reserves the right to accept, reject or ask for clarification of any or all bids in order to ensure the best interests of the Library are served. Maud Preston Palenske Library reserves the right to accept bids that are not the lowest if it is determined to be in the best interest of the Library. Consequently, a qualifying proposal for this project will meet the following criteria:

- Demonstrated understanding of the project and familiarity with library websites;
- Compliance with the RFP requirements;

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- Demonstrated experience with similar projects (vendor profile, references, and portfolio); and,
- Competitive project costs.

The Library's Website Committee will evaluate all submissions, select and interview finalists, and make a recommendation to the Library's Board of Trustees. The Maud Preston Palenske Memorial Library reserves the right to reject nonconforming, conditional, or otherwise non-qualifying proposals.